

**2011 King County Board for Developmental Disabilities
21st Annual Legislative Forum**

MAINTAIN SUPPORT OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES

In these hard economic times, the King County Board for Developmental Disabilities recognizes the unenviable task before the Legislature to balance the budget. We believe that all individuals regardless of disability status must still have the opportunity to productively participate in their communities; the most vulnerable individuals cannot afford to lose essential services. This means:

- The opportunity to be supported to live in the community with control over where and with whom they live
- The opportunity to be employed and earn wages
- The opportunity to participate in community activity including recreation or just being a neighbor

The systems that currently operate to help individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) to achieve these fundamental opportunities are very well established and work at an admirable level. However, they are stretched to the limits and cannot experience drastic reductions in funding without jeopardizing quality of life for thousands of people.

***The Board strongly recommends** that employment, community access, and Medicaid Personal Care services be maintained at current levels for all those currently accessing these critical supports regardless of their waiver status. The Board also believes that residential supports need to be funded adequately.*

BUILD STRONG COMMUNITIES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS IN CRISIS

The Board believes that children need families to live and grow. Over 8,000 families have requested low-cost, high impact Family Supports. Because of the lack of resources to address individuals with complex issues, 35 young people under the age of 21 have been placed in State Residential Habilitation Centers (institutions). In addition, many young adults are without adequate services, placing undue stress on caring families. An ever increasing number of adults are living at home without adequate resources to allow them to engage in meaningful activities during the day. Families constitute the largest number of Long Term Care providers throughout the DD system. It is time for the State of Washington to carefully examine the current distribution of scarce resources and make hard decisions based upon economic efficiency and best practice in supporting individuals in their home communities as respected and full participants. This calls for rethinking the need for institutional services at the current level.

***The Board recommends** adequate funding for Family Supports, including Individual Family Services, Intensive In-Home Behavior Supports, and Crisis Intervention. The State must invest resources in making local communities more viable and move toward consolidation of State institutions.*

ADEQUATELY ADDRESS NEEDS OF THE EARLY INTERVENTION (EI) SYSTEM

Early Intervention Services are essential to the healthy development of infants and toddlers with developmental delays. In King County 27 percent of the infants and toddlers who participate in early intervention no longer need special intervention services by age three. Early childhood professionals are more frequently identifying children in need of EI due to the increase of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, earlier identification of children with hearing impairments, and increased understanding of brain development during the first three years of life.

***The Board recommends** that there be no reductions in funding for EI Services.*

SERVICES FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

The Legislature has long recognized the importance of ensuring available funds for young adults moving from school to adult employment services. As national leaders in supported employment, King County, in collaboration with a series of partners, has developed working relationships with school districts to improve outcomes in this important transition. In King County approximately 70 percent of graduates are non-waiver. Individuals should have equal access to good outcomes upon leaving school regardless of their waiver status.

***The Board recommends** the Legislature appropriate funds to ensure there are available and appropriate programs for all individuals with DD transitioning from high schools regardless of their waiver status.*

THE GROWING AGING POPULATION IN THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY

Approximately 1,500 families statewide have a family member with a developmental disability who is 40 years of age or older living at home. These families have been an important source of care in the DD system and need additional supports due to issues related to aging.

***The Board recommends** the Legislature support the current ADSA proposal to add funding to assist families in this situation with necessary planning assistance and in-home or residential supports.*

The Board Also Supports:

- **Addition of excess properties at Fircrest School to the DD Land Trust (Dan Thompson Land Trust)**
- **Continuation of the important \$3 million DD set-aside for the Housing Trust Fund**